Project Pelican: Helping Louisiana Recover and Rebuild

Underlying Principles of the

The Hurricane Katrina Disaster Relief and Economic Recovery Act of 2005

• Agriculture

- ✓ Provide creative and flexible disaster assistance for affected agricultural commodities and producers that addresses the more than \$2 billion catastrophic damage to entire industries, namely forestry, sugarcane, cotton, rice, dairy, vegetables, wholesale nurseries, citrus, strawberries, cattle, turtle, alligators, oysters, menhaden, shrimp, commercial finfish, crabs, charter fishing, crawfish, catfish
- ✓ **Dairy** replacement of generators, tractors that are necessary to keep operations running until power is restored; FEMA assistance, Emergency Assistance to Dairy Producers
- ✓ **Shrimp (and other fisheries)** supplemental income until production resumes; FEMA/Department of Labor assistance
- ✓ LSU AgCenter Repair damages and costs associated with the hurricane and sheltering (Louisiana Ag Experiment Station; Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service); FEMA assistance; CSREES
- ✓ **USDA Rural Development**—Provide temporary waivers and exemptions necessary for increased workload due to current population shifts
- ✓ **Crop Disaster Payments** (must show 35% loss to qualify)—cotton, rice, vegetables, wholesale nurseries, citrus, oysters (not currently authorized)
- ✓ Emergency Conservation Assistance Program livestock, oysters (not currently authorized)
- ✓ Livestock Compensation Program + Livestock Indemnity
 Program + Dairy Emergency Assistance Program cover dairy
 and livestock losses, production losses and milk spoilage
- ✓ Tree Assistance Program Citrus and Forestry (not currently authorized)
- ✓ Possible new/temporary FSA programs for: dairy, livestock, citrus, sugar
- ✓ State and Private Forestry restoration and rehabilitation of forest lands

- ✓ NRCS Emergency Watershed Assistance Program remove debris and facilitate drainage
- ✓ **CSREES** Hurricane Forestry Damage Research Initiative
- ✓ Delta Regional Authority additional authorities to support recovery efforts

• Coastal Restoration, Hurricane Protection, and Flood Control

- ✓ \$14 billion to restore wetlands in the Louisiana Coastal Area to reduce storm surge.
- √ \$20 billion to accelerate repair and enhancement of levees and drainage projects in coastal Louisiana to protect against a Category 5 hurricane.
- ✓ Streamline process for construction and reduce non-federal cost share of these Corps of Engineers projects
- ✓ Dedicate a percentage of the revenues generated off of the Gulf Coast toward long term coastal restoration needs and infrastructure re-development.

Education

- ✓ Provide \$4,000 per pupil in financial assistance to schools who take in displaced children.
- ✓ Establish a Return Home fund to cover any pay gaps for teachers who forgo permanent employment outside the state.
- ✓ Rebuild the roughly 150 elementary and secondary schools affected by the disaster
- ✓ Provide Universities and Colleges with Pay Roll Assistance, while providing higher education students with the financial assistance they need in the interim
- ✓ Assistance to children and their families enrolling in new schools. Incentives for teachers to continue teaching in the Louisiana school system.
- ✓ Assistance for displaced college students to allow them to continue their studies and provide the educated workforce necessary to rebuild southern Louisiana.
- ✓ Assistance to post-secondary institutions for relief services and facilities provided to Katrina victims.
- ✓ Assistance to institutions to ensure they can retain faculty and other staff and continue operating until they can resume classes.
- ✓ Incentives for universities to rebuild in disaster areas and facilitate the redevelopment of the local economy.

Environment

- ✓ Dedicate all necessary resources to the restoration of Lake Pontchartrain and the Gulf Coast
- ✓ Focus immediate attention on improving the water and air quality in affected areas
- ✓ Ensure necessary screenings and clean up assistance for homes and businesses at risk of contamination

• Economic Redevelopment

- ✓ Provide incentives for employers to hire displaced workers and local businesses.
- ✓ Provide bridge loans and tax relief to help re-vitalize Louisiana's small businesses.
- ✓ Provide for federal assistance to Restore local tax bases
- ✓ Direct federal resources towards addressing broader economic impact of disaster
- ✓ Create financial incentives to encourage businesses to hire individuals and invest in buildings, equipment and infrastructure within the affected area.
- ✓ Provide payroll assistance to state and local governments to maintain key public employees.

Federal Disaster Assistance Programs

- ✓ Increase the federal share FEMA disaster relief from the current 75% to 100% for 3 years, retroactive from the date of major disaster declaration.
- ✓ Provide Congressional authority to the President and the Administration to waive any and all program requirements necessary to effectively serve federal disaster area.
- ✓ Modify existing federal disaster programs to meet immediate and ongoing needs of affected residents

Financial Institutions

- ✓ Establishment of a clear protocol to enable financial institutions to cash government checks when consumers have limited forms of identification.
- ✓ Allow financial institutions flexibility in loan forbearance offered consumers, as well as authorization of "fresh-start" refinancing options for consumers.
- ✓ Increase the loan limit for SBA business disaster relief loans to facilitate "bridge-financing" for businesses in the affected areas.

- ✓ Creation of a public-private risk sharing mechanism to assist financial institutions where collateral securing loan portfolios is damaged, but a reasonable expectation of collateral recovery is anticipated.
- ✓ Grant federal regulators flexibility so that prompt corrective action is not automatically required of financial institutions in the affected areas.
- ✓ Allow insurance payments and emergency government assistance placed in depository institutions to be treated as pass through deposits for the purposes of establishing reserve requirements.

Health Care

- ✓ Rebuild hospitals and health centers in affected areas
- ✓ Provide incentives for high need medical professionals to return to affected communities
- ✓ Provide temporary health insurance coverage for those who have been left without it
- ✓ Provide mental health and substance abuse services needed by victims
- ✓ Focus attention and resources on emerging threats to public health

Housing

- ✓ Six months mortgage relief for all home owners whose homes for all homeowners whose homes were damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Katrina.
- ✓ Grants to states to implement local housing strategies designed to increase home ownership and affordable housing opportunities through the HOME program.
- ✓ \$50 billion in assistance to communities in rebuilding through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
- ✓ Funding of emergency Section 8 housing vouchers for evacuees to provide a long-term solution to the existing housing crisis in Louisiana.
- ✓ Statutory waivers of regulations governing key HUD programs, such as HOME, to support waivers already granted by the Department where the Secretary's authority to grant waivers is in legal contention.
- ✓ Increases in funding of HUD programs such as CDBG and HOME which, when combined with tax credits and other federal assistance, will be leveraged to fund reconstruction efforts.

- ✓ Authorization of a Southeast LA HOPE VI initiative to rebuild communities and neighborhoods in the area.
- ✓ Home Program Funds for construction, rehabilitation of damaged homes, rental assistance and home ownership costs.
- ✓ Waive income requirements, rental contribution, and to include victims of Hurricane Katrina as part of the "first time homebuyer" programs.
- ✓ American Dream Downpayment Initiative (ADDI) to those who lost homes in Katrina with the down-payment and closing costs associated with buying a home.
- ✓ Section 8: Tenant Based Rental Assistance to add additional funds for an Emergency Voucher Program and will cut through the redtape associated with HUD, such as waiving income requirements, rental contribution by the voucher-holder, waiving the one year lease and pre-occupancy inspection requirements.
- ✓ CDBG: Community Development Block Grant Program to get an accurate damage assessment. And put a substantial amount of money into the flexible CDBG program to ensure that the money is used for what the state and local authorities need most-roads, schools, and housing.

Labor

- ✓ The delegation is working to ensure displaced workers in Louisiana will be adequately covered either through Regular Unemployment Compensation or Disaster Unemployment Assistance, promoting the extension of regular unemployment benefits beyond the initial 26 weeks of assistance.
- ✓ Working toward providing increased access to job training and job placement services.

Military

- ✓ Strengthen all defense assets and military housing in Louisiana that were compromised or destroyed
- ✓ Rebuild the VA Hospital in New Orleans
- ✓ Provide support for the National Guard as they continue assisting in the rescue and recovery operation
- ✓ Re-emphasize the wisdom and importance of Federal City

Tax Relief

✓ Provide tax relief to individuals and families so they may return home and prosper

- ✓ Provide tax relief to businesses to lessen the economic impact of the disaster
- ✓ Provide tax incentives to businesses to return and re-grow in the affected region
- ✓ Holds families harmless against the loss of tax benefits due to temporary relocations
- ✓ Ensures that families are not taxed on forgiven debt.
- ✓ Provides tax relief for housing assistance to dislocated persons
- ✓ Allows full deductibility of personal casualty losses.
- ✓ Provides a longer period of time to replace damaged property without incurring tax.
- ✓ Expands the availability of below-market mortgages in the disaster areas.
- ✓ Encourages cash donations by individuals.
- ✓ Encourages cash donations by corporations.
- ✓ Increases the mileage reimbursement rate for charitable donation deductions.
- ✓ Delaying tax-related deadlines.
- ✓ Disaster assistance phone number and suspension of notices.
- ✓ Waive means-testing requirements for low-income housing.
- ✓ Allow use of dyed diesel on highways.
- ✓ Extend pension contribution deadlines.
- ✓ Expedite recognition of Katrina-related charities.
- ✓ Improved access to fuel for search and recovery efforts.
- ✓ Educate public about available relief.
- ✓ Extension of deadlines for paying excise and payroll taxes.
- ✓ No tax imposed on leave-based donation programs.
- \checkmark Relax rules relating to tax exempt bonds affected by the hurricane.
- ✓ Increase standard business mileage rate for deductions.
- ✓ Waiver of duties and custom formalities.
- ✓ No tax imposed on disaster relief payments.
- ✓ Trigger 4-year replacement period for involuntary conversions.
- ✓ Allow payments to employees from employer private foundation.
- ✓ Operation of vessels.

Trade and Commerce

- ✓ Rebuild and revitalize affected ports
- ✓ Restore the stability and economic viability of our historic fishing and shrimping industry through disaster and long term assistance

Transportation

✓ Accelerate the repair and enhancement of all affected transportation infrastructure, including I-49, I-10 and LA 1.

- ✓ Accelerate appropriate metropolitan planning organization transportation improvement plans in areas absorbing demographic and traffic surges
- ✓ Extend, from 180 days to 3 years, the period in which a state must expend fully reimbursed emergency transportation funding.
- ✓ Lift the \$100 million cap on Federal Highway Administration's Emergency Relief Program.
- ✓ Expand corridors vital to nation's energy supply to minimize future vulnerability
- ✓ Fully restore viability of Louisiana Ports
- ✓ Extend and lift all appropriate Federal Transit Administration waivers to ensure efficient, integrated transit systems in affected areas.

• Veterans' Care

- ✓ Co-Payments for VA healthcare and medications: Suspend copayment billing and collection activities for veterans impacted by Hurricane Katrina, indefinitely.
- ✓ Waive all income requirements for veterans seeking to enroll in VA healthcare.
- ✓ Establish a clear protocol for transporting Veterans in the impacted area to VA clinics/hospitals throughout the region, including Houston, Jackson, Baton Rouge, Alexandria and Shreveport.
- ✓ Extend Montgomery GI benefits to cover training costs associated with purchasing a small business, i.e. franchised business, to enhance job economic opportunity for veterans residing in Katrina impacted areas.